

THE ASPEN TIMES

Options, not headaches, behind commuter award

By Janet Urquhart
Aspen Times Staff Writer

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The Environmental Protection Agency has chosen Aspen as the first city in the nation to receive its Best Workplaces for Commuters award.

The award, honoring the community as a whole, will be presented to Mayor Helen Klanderud by EPA representative Jeffra Rockwell on "Find Another Way Day" - Wednesday, July 9.

While the award may seem incongruous with the traffic congestion of late, exacerbated by the busy holiday weekend, the EPA is recognizing Aspen's commuting options, not its commuting headaches, according to Lynn Bader, city transportation coordinator.

"I think people working in Aspen have options to get out of their cars - they may not choose to," she said.

The EPA presents the award to employers or broader organizations like business parks that provide exceptional commute options to workers - car-pool benefits, free shuttle service, bus passes and such. The agency contacted Bader about a year ago to seek out potential award recipients, but ultimately decided the community as a whole deserved the award.

Aspen is the first city to be recognized for meeting the national standard of excellence for commuter benefits, according to the EPA. Specifically, the city is being acknowledged for providing free in-town bus service, car-pool parking, a program to help car-poolers link up, a car-sharing program, and outreach services to employers and visitors.

"We are pleased and excited to recognize Aspen for its leadership and foresight in providing transportation options to its citizens and visitors alike," Rockwell said in a press release. "Aspen provides its commuters with big-city benefits to preserve its small-town appeal. We're very impressed."

Next week's Find Another Way Day in Aspen will take place Wednesday from 7 to 9 a.m. at Paepcke Park. Individuals are urged to ride a bus to work, walk, bike or car pool - anything but drive a single-occupant vehicle to town.



Above: Commuter-friendly Aspen turned commuter ugly as holiday visitors mixed it up with afternoon commuters on Main Street yesterday afternoon. Paul Conrad photo

The party will include a breakfast with Krispy Kreme donuts, music, information from transportation experts, bike tunes, fitness information and prize giveaways.

The event is part of Find Another Way Week. On Monday, bus riders will be treated to breakfast snacks and gifts at Rubey Park from 7 to 9 a.m.; on Tuesday, car-poolers will get free stuff at the airport parking kiosk from 6 to 9 a.m.; Thursday will be Try Another Way Day from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Centennial Park in Glenwood Springs, featuring a barbecue lunch and live music; and Friday will feature a party from 3 to 5 p.m. at Aspen Highlands Village, with food, prizes, biking and bike tunes, lawn bowling and live music from New Monsoon.

Attendees at any of the events may enter to win the grand prize: a stay at the Hotel Monaco in Denver and two tickets to see Neil Young in concert.

[Janet Urquhart's e-mail address is janet@aspentimes.com]